

Notices

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This section of the FEDERAL REGISTER contains documents other than rules or proposed rules that are applicable to the public. Notices of hearings and investigations, committee meetings, agency decisions and rulings, delegations of authority, filing of petitions and applications and agency statements of organization and functions are examples of documents appearing in this section.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Agricultural Marketing Service

[Docket No. PY-95-002]

Tentative Voluntary Poultry Grade Standards

AGENCY: Agricultural Marketing Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) is announcing that it is approving the test marketing of USDA grade identified raw, ready-to-cook, boneless-skinless poultry products, based on tentative grade standards.

DATES: This test-market period begins June 12, 1995 and ends June 12, 1996.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Larry W. Robinson, Chief, Grading Branch, Poultry Division, 202-720-3271.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

Poultry grading is a voluntary program provided under the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946, as amended (7 U.S.C. 1621 et seq.), and is offered on a fee-for-service basis. It is designed to assist the orderly marketing of poultry products. Quality in practical terms refers to the usability, desirability, and value of a product, as well as its marketability. Poultry grade standards identify and measure degrees of quality in poultry products. They permit important quality attributes to be evaluated uniformly and accurately; they provide a way for buyers and sellers to negotiate using a common language.

Once poultry has been graded according to these standards, it may be identified with the USDA grademark. Over the years, processors have found it advantageous to market grade-identified poultry products and consumers have come to rely on the USDA grademark as

assurance that they are getting the quality they want.

Poultry producers and processors are continually developing new, innovative products. Chicken and turkey, in particular, have been transformed into numerous boneless and/or skinless products, thus increasing poultry's share of the consumer's food dollar and responding to consumer demand for food with more built-in convenience and less fat. Current regulations (7 CFR part 70) provide grade standards for boneless poultry breasts, thighs, and tenderloins (§ 70.231), as well as for skinless carcasses and parts (§ 70.232). In addition, on March 30, 1995, the Agency approved the test marketing of USDA grade-identified, boneless/skinless poultry legs and drumsticks, based on tentative grade standards, through April 1, 1996 (60 FR 16428).

The Agency has now been requested by industry to permit the grade identification of raw, ready-to-cook, boneless-skinless poultry products without added ingredients. These products include poultry that has been reduced in size by cutting, slicing, cubing, or similar means and products that are currently marketed ungraded because there are no grade standards for them.

The Agency recognizes that before new standards of quality can be established or current standards of quality can be amended, appropriate investigation is needed. This includes the test marketing of experimental packs of grade-identified poultry products to determine production requirements and consumer acceptance, and to permit the collection of other necessary data. Current regulations (§ 70.3) provide the Agency with the flexibility needed to permit such experimentation, so that new procedures and grading techniques may be tested.

The Agency has worked in partnership with members of the industry to develop tentative grade standards for raw, ready-to-cook, boneless-skinless poultry products without added ingredients and is granting permission for a 1-year test marketing period. At the expiration of this 1-year period, the Agency will then evaluate the test results to determine if the current poultry grading regulations should be amended, through notice-and-comment rulemaking, to include the following tentative standards.

Tentative Grade Standards for Ready-to-cook, Boneless-skinless Poultry Products Without Added Ingredients—A Quality

1. The raw, ready-to-cook, boneless-skinless poultry products without added ingredients must be labeled in accordance with 9 CFR part 381.

2. The poultry product must be derived from ready-to-cook carcasses or parts.

3. The skin and bones shall be removed in a neat manner without undue mutilation of adjacent muscle.

4. The poultry products may be further processed and subdivided by cutting, slicing, cubing, or similarly reducing the size prior to grading. Individual subdivided pieces of poultry must be of sufficient, and relatively uniform, size and shape to determine grade with respect to the quality factors set forth in this section.

5. The poultry products shall be free of cartilage, tendons extending more than 1/2 inch beyond the meat tissue, blood clots, bruises, and discolorations other than slight discolorations, provided they do not detract from the appearance of the product.

6. Trimming and minor flesh abrasions due to preparation techniques are permitted provided they result in a relatively smooth outer surface with no angular cuts, tears, holes, or undue muscle mutilation in the meat portion.

Dated: June 6, 1995.

Lon Hatamiya,

Administrator.

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Forest Service

RIN 0596-AB53

Outfitting and Guiding Permit Administration and Fees

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice; adoption of final policy.

SUMMARY: The Forest Service is adopting final policy and procedures for issuing and administering permits and assessing fees for outfitting and guiding activities on National Forest System lands. This policy has been revised to respond to comments on the proposed and interim policies previously published in the **Federal Register** and to address recommendations in several General